

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric comprising
a nonwoven, substantially unpacked substrate having basis weight in the range from about 15 to about 150 g/m², and density in the range from about 0.02 to about 0.12 g/cm³,
wherein the nonwoven substrate is bonded with a binder applied to ~~the outer surfaces~~
of the substrate in a sufficiently uniform manner so that substantially no areas greater than the spaces between stitch insertion points are devoid of binder and wherein the binder constitutes from about 2% to about 25% of the total weight of the sum of binder and nonwoven substrate weights, and wherein the substrate is stitch-bonded with yarns arranged in a stitch pattern that allows the stitch-bonded fabric to be stretched in at least one direction by a factor of about 2.5 ~~to about 5.0~~ or more from the as-stitched dimensions without forming local ruptures therein, and wherein the stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric can be washed and dried at least twenty times.
2. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder when made into a solid strip about 0.5 mm thick can stretch to at least a length of about 1.5x the original length before breaking.
3. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the stitch pattern allows the stitch-bonded fabric to be stretched in the cross-direction.
4. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the nonwoven substrate is selected from a group consisting of carded staple web, spunlaid continuous filament web, airlaid staple web.
5. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the nonwoven substrate is entangled.

6. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 5, wherein the entanglement occurred before the substrate is bonded with binder.
7. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 5, wherein the entanglement occurred before stitching.
8. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied to the nonwoven substrate dissolved in a liquid solvent.
9. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 8, wherein the binder is applied before the nonwoven substrate is stitch-bonded.
10. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 8, wherein the binder is applied after the nonwoven substrate is stitch-bonded.
11. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder constitutes a portion of the fibers of the nonwoven substrate.
12. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 11, wherein the binder forms co-extruded or liquid-applied sheaths around the fibers of the nonwoven substrate.
13. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 11, wherein the binder forms co-extruded or liquid-applied a side-by-side portion to the fibers of the nonwoven substrate.
14. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 11, wherein the nonwoven substrate comprises at least 40% of fibers with binder constituting a portion of the fibers.
15. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 14, wherein the nonwoven substrate comprises at least 80% with binder constituting a portion of the fibers.
16. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied in a liquid form.

17. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied as powder to the nonwoven substrate.
18. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 17, wherein the powder comprises thermoplastic powder and is applied with a liquid suspension medium.
19. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied to the substrate before the substrate is stitched.
20. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied to the substrate after the substrate is stitched.
21. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied to the substrate after the substrate is stretched.
22. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is activated before the substrate is stitched.
23. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is activated after the substrate is stitched.
24. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is activated after the substrate is stretched.
25. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied substantially to the surface of the substrate.
26. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied by spraying.
27. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied with a doctor knife.

28. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied by foaming.

29. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the stitching yarn is selected from a group consisting of inelastic yarns, textured stretch yarns, elastic yarns and partially molecularly oriented polymer yarns.

30-34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim ~~135~~, wherein the binder constitutes from about 2% to about 10% of the total weight of the sum of binder and nonwoven substrate weights.

37. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder comprises a latex binder.

38. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 37, wherein the latex binder is selected from a group consisting of acrylic, styrene acrylates, vinyl acetate, vinyl acrylic, ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA), styrene butadiene rubber (SBR), polyvinyl chloride (PVC) ethylene vinyl chloride binders, and mixtures thereof.

39. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 37, wherein the latex binder is selected from a group consisting of rubber (copolymer of acrylonitrile and butadiene) and binders containing butadiene, butyl acrylate and 2-ethyl hexyl acrylate.

40. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the latex binder comprises a polymer, which was polymerized from at least one monomer having a glass temperature of about 80 °C or less

41. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 40, wherein the monomer is selected from a group consisting of ethylene, butadiene, butyl acrylate, vinyl acrylate and vinyl chloride.

42. (Withdrawn) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder comprises polyvinyl acetate (PVA) dispersions or emulsions.
43. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder comprises copolymers of polyesters or polyolefins or polyamides.
44. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the binder is applied before the web is formed on to the surfaces of at least 30% of the fibers exposed on the front and back of the fabric by coating the fibers or by co-extruding the binder with the fibers and wherein substantially all the bonds occur at the crossover intersection points.
45. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 44, wherein the binder is present on the surfaces of at least 40% of the exposed fibers.
46. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 45, wherein the binder is present on the surfaces of at least 50% of the exposed fibers.
47. (Original) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the bonds between the fibers in the nonwoven substrate partially break and separate where fibers are at a small angle to each other, and remain in place where fibers intersect at larger angles to each other and make direct contact with each other or indirect contact through the binder bridging across as the product is stretched.
- 48-51. (Canceled)
52. (new) The stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the stitch-bonded nonwoven fabric can be stretched by a factor of about 5.0 or less in said at least one direction.